dispensed with for sanction of credit limit by NABARD to the well performing scheduled state cooperative banks w.e.f. 1-4-97.

(iii) NABARD w.e.f., June 2, 1997 has decided to reduce the rate of interest by 1 per cent for financing the cooperative banks for refinancing for various purposes.

(iv) Handloom concentrated districts have been identified and requested the NABARD for formulating credit plans for the benefit of the weavers in these concentrated areas.

(v) The credit flow to handloom sector has gone up from Rs. 530 crores in 1993-94 to Rs. 759 crores in 96-97. In respect of Gujrat as per the information furnished by NABARD, the credit flow was Rs. 52 lakhs in 1995-96 and Rs. 62.45 loans in 1996-97.

(vi) It has been proposed to the Ministry of Finance to extend the concessional refinance credit from NABARD to the State Handloom Development Corporations also so as to increase coverage.

Declaring Delhi-Haridwar Road as National Highway

*304. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had taken a decision for declaring Delhi-Haridwar Road Via Meerut a National Highway and extending the same upto Badrinath;

(b) whether Similar decision was also taken for declaring Haridwar-Uttarkashi road as National Highway;

(c) whether Government are aware of the fact that there are many Hindu religious places on both routes and the people visit to the Holy Shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Uttarkashi etc. every year in large number;

(d) whether keeping the above facts in view Government have implemented the above decision; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) The declaration of any State Road as National Highway depends upon several factors specified in the criteria for this purpose which, inter-alia, includes high density of traffic over adequate length, overall availability of funds and not merely connecting specific tourist/ religious places.

Migration of people from Nepal

*305. SHRIMATI JAYANTHI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governmet are aware of the large scale migration of people from Nepal to India;

(b) whether a large number of them crossing border into India are AIDS patients;

(c) whether several other divisible forces are also infiltrating into the country; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to curb such infiltration?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA): (a) and (b) Under the Indo-Nepal Treaty of peace and

Friendship 1950 the citizens of the two countries are free to move across Indo-Nepal border on reciprocal basis. Therefore, it is very difficult to have firm estimates of citizens of one country crossing into another country at any point of time. No large scale migration of people from Nepal to India has however, come to Government's notice. Also no cases of AIDS patients have been reported.

(c) and (d) There are reports of several divisive forces making efforts to infiltrate anti-national elements into the country but all concerned agencies especially in border areas have been alerted to keep strong vigil to prevent entry and exist of undesirable elements. Some of the measures adopted are as follows:—

(i) Government have taken steps to increase vigilance on the border to check the activities of undesirable elements and militants.

(ii) All Central and State Agencies have been instructed step up conforcement efforts in a coordinated manner.

(iii) Regular bi-lateral contact is being maintained with the authorities of His Majesty's Government in Nepal at various levels for closer cooperation between the agencies of the two countries for combating trans-border crime and terrorism.

Contract to KELTRON for supply of electrical and electronic items for Defence

*306. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala Government requested for offering contract to KELTRON, a State Public Sector Undertaing for supply of electrical and electronic items to Defence; and

(b) if so, the steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The offers of M/s Keltron have been duly considered. During the last six years, orders worth over Rs. 29.5 crores have been given to the Company by the Department of Defence Production & Supplies alone Contracts amounting to Rs. 630.71 lakhs have been awarded to the company during 1997. Two offers of M/s Keltron are under consideration.

Funds for widening of State Highways

*307. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have agreed to fund the widening of heavily used State Highways;

(b) if so, the criterion adopted to assist the widening of specific State Highways;

(c) whether any such request has come from Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details therof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) Central Government is primarily responsible for development and maintenance of roads declared as National Highways. Roads other than National Highways are essentially the responsibility of the concerned State Governments.

However, the Central Government provides assistance to the State Governments for roads of inter-State and economic importance. Under this scheme, 100 per cent loan assistance is given to the projects which have